

2005 NCOA^{Link} Licensee Conferences
Question and Answer documentation

Question	Response
1 When analyzing results with high match rates (> 20%), what is the USPS looking for?	What we look at are several factors. A high match rate that shows up on the same list several times might indicate the list owner is not updating the list for some reason. A high match rate on lists with very small numbers of unique names and addresses might indicate someone doing skip tracing. A high match rate in combination with a company name that is suspicious (Track Inc) can cause us to ask about it.
2 Discuss Processing Acknowledgment Forms with regards to brokers. Prospects and clients are telling some Licensees that other Licensees are not requiring the same extent of PAFs, especially when working with companies who have hundreds and thousands of customers. e.g. Companies are claiming themselves as a list owner with some Licensees while other Licensees are requiring them to get PAFs from each of those hundred or thousand customers.	Reference the newly developed PAF Question and Answer documentation, posted on the RIBBS website.
3 Using the information supplied by ANKLink is there going to be a way for LSP to send only the flagged records to a FSP without having to get an approval for exceeding the 20% move rate?	Yes. The USPS will be implementing a field in the CSL that will contain a code indicating that type of process. The USPS will also solicit other potential issues for code assignment. It is also recommended that software developers include a comment section within their process to electronically capture other comments about a processed file.
4 Reporting: The USPS collects a lot of data via monthly reporting - can we get some feed back in the form of aggregate data like trend reports?	Yes. We are looking into what is and is not appropriate for us to share. Concern: This information will be used by licensees for marketing purposes.
5 Reporting: Are there any reporting changes planned or being considered?	Refer to presentation on reporting, to be included with the meeting minutes.
6 What changes are planned for the MASS/CASS Cycle K?	Please review the following links: http://ribbs.usps.gov/files/CASS/MASSPREMTG2005.DOC http://ribbs.usps.gov/files/CASS/CYCLE_K_REQUIREMENTS2006-2007.PPT
7 Address LACS converted addresses as old address within NCOALink. If only the pre-LACS version appears as an old address, the Licensee fears the loss of matches when running LACS prior to NCOALink and would like USPS to create multiple records for COAs with LACS converted old addresses.	For records that are processed through LACSLink prior to NCOALink and obtain a LACSLink NEW address, both records could be kept and run through NCOALink.
8 What is the USPS doing to resolve any / all FN 5 and FN 14 resulting addresses?	The intent of the NCOALink product is to provide move information on a customer. By providing the return codes 5, 14, and 19 the list owner can decide whether or not to mail to those customers or contact those customers. USPS employs internal processes continually in an attempt to resolve these issues.
9 The NCOA Flat structure is such that it can be updated in place. Are there plans to provide weekly updates instead of a full file replacement?	This is being considered. There are logistics to work out before a decision can be made on this issue.

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10	A-Z ZIP table processing performance can be improved if the tables are loaded in true ZIP sequence. Will this be considered in future releases?	Such a change would require the data to be presented in sequential format initially. This is not the nature of the technology, based in part on security concerns, and is therefore not feasible at this time.
11	Fastcheck reference files would be very useful. Will the file be made available to FSP?	No
12	Are there any plans to create a 60 month reference file?	No
13	Can nixie codes be added to indicate how the match was done? For example first name was matched via nickname or initial. Or that Soundex logic was used to make the match. Can we make up our own additional nixie codes?	Optional INTERMEDIATE RETURN CODES can be incorporated by an NCOALink software developer, providing it is made clear that the values do not represent the final result of the exact input or query name on the return record and does not negate or replace the USPS NCOALink final return code. Do NOT use developer defined return codes with values between 00 and 99.
14	Future moves are not currently on the file. Mailers typically prepare mailings that have drop dates in the future, so it would be helpful to have future moves. The NCOALink software could control the data based on the scheduled mail date.	Not much value to this concept. Very few COAs are in the database with future moves anyway. Also, impossible to police with mailers to make sure that they do not mail to new addresses prior to MED.
15	How quickly do addresses get into the NCOALink Product? Please review the process of how and when a COA gets added to the NCOALink Product?	The build process starts on Monday. Any data collected from CFS from the previous Monday to Sunday is incorporated. It takes 10 days on average for a COA to get into the product.
16	Can we get a weekly last minute file of moves that are not yet on the weekly master file? These can then be applied to mailings just before they drop into the system.	This type of endeavor is not feasible due to the amount of processing that occurs to obtain the final product. Also, this may be rectified if daily transactional based updates are made available. NOTE: Such transactional updates would ONLY be applicable to flat file users.
17	Counting and reporting intermediate footnotes - do we or do we not?	Intermediate return codes and/or Optional return codes are not counted or reported in the CSL. Only the FINAL USPS NCOALink approved return code is counted.
18	With regards to plural names, can the trailing "s" be dropped from all surnames?	This is already addressed in the developer guide. Please refer to the current SDG.
19	FN 13 - gender mismatch - when matching nicknames, can stop the processing prematurely. Another nickname might be "gender unknown" and produce a match. Please discuss.	This requires further review.
20	Would the USPS consider, on a request only basis, under a non-disclosure agreement (or regulations added into the Developer License Agreement) allowing vendors to get access to sets of Live data DVD's for testing purposes only?	No
21	Would the USPS consider allowing processing beyond footnotes normally considered final? Namely, gender and middle name mismatches which might result in matches on later attempts.	This requires further review.

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22	Would the USPS consider allowing expanded name sequences upon request and/or additional match logic combinations? Specifically, allowing last name misspellings to be used in conjunction with first name misspellings or nicknames.	No. The possibility of mismatches would be too great.
23	Will the USPS ever consider adding temporary COAs to the NCOALink database?	Currently under review, but this data will not be added in the near future.
24	Will the USPS consider a family matching logic option that bypasses business matching?	A family matching logic option is not a possibility. However, a "residential" matching option is being added that will serve the purpose of bypassing business matching, allowing only Individual and Family moves to be considered.
25	Will the USPS consider adding additional information to the database? Such as: Deceased flag, LACS converted indication, chaining date information	No. Discussed at previous meetings. Rationale has not changed.
26	Any update on when the Web Access is scheduled to be operational for loading of monthly reports? And can the implementation be done so as to foster automated report submission?	Planning on 10/06
27	Please provide an update on the status of SuiteLink.	Information was presented but remains confidential at this time.
28	Since SuiteLink will require Business Name matching does the USPS plan to make any changes to the existing Business matching rules (e.g. SHA coding of Business name)?	No. However, SuiteLink does not use the same business name matching logic as NCOALink due to security concerns. Refer to presentation. Information remains confidential.
29	Will APTLink and SuiteLink be available only to FSPs?	Likely they will be universal offerings, however final strategy is not yet determined.
30	When will ANKLink™ be provided with data from CFS II or other sources not in 48 month NCOALink? Will all NCOALink Licensees be provided this extended data, or just FSP?	Information on potential future phases of ANKLink is not available at this time.
31	When will SuiteLink™ be released? Discuss functional details and data sources.	Information was presented during the conference and remains confidential at this time.
32	What is the Status of IZ4™. Define IZ4 please. What is the planned purpose of IZ4? It has been in the USPS Strategic Plan in the past.	Project is on hold. The information remains confidential at this time.
33	What is the Status of AptLink? What will the data sources be? Can the USPS use old side only or new side only or both from the USPS NCOALink files? Must commercial files be used?	Project is on hold. Information remains confidential at this time.
34	Do you plan to offer an Employee-not-Here-Link product as discussed at one point in the past? What will the data sources be? When might we see it	This project is not currently in development. Any information remains confidential at this time.
35	Please maintain your current phone book/email addresses and organizational responsibilities list on the RIBBS site.	Security concerns prevent this.
36	To add some extra value to the FSP license, DSF should be free.	As always, the USPS is looking at the value of the products to see what price should be required based on the market value of the data.

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37	With regards to processing outside the territory, how does the USPS apply the license to an FSP's customer located within the Territory but with satellite operations internationally?	Processing can occur for this customer but all updates must be processed prior to making updated information available to satellite operations.
38	With regards to processing outside the territory, how does the USPS apply the license to an FSP's customer with HQs outside the Territory but operations facilities within the Territory that would be the direct recipient of processing services?	Such companies are encouraged to submit files via their US based operations with the US based affiliate functioning as the list administrator for the mailing file.
39	Re-certification for CASS is no longer required with NCOALink. Can DSF2 be structured the same way?	DSF2 testing is performed through CASS testing and separation of DSF2 is not feasible at this time.
40	Will there be a LACSLink fee for FSPs?	If the FSP is not a LACSLink Distributor, there will not be a fee to receive LACSLink data.
41	ANKLink has been touted as an alternative to 48 month processing. The implication is that a mailer can send their mailing list to an LSP and get the same benefit as a FSP and save money. Is this the desired result that the USPS expected to achieve with ANKLink? If so, what benefits does the USPS perceive of having a full service offering available to the marketplace?	No, that is not the desired result. The intent of ANKLink is to identify addresses for which COAs exist, providing that knowledge to the mailing list owner.
42	When will the Move Update standard be required for all classes of mail? Similarly, when will the existing 185 day update requirement be changed to more frequent updating?	The last Federal Register Notice on this stated that there would be an 18 month "waiting" period before implementation of the final ruling after it was announced. The final ruling has not been made so the 18 month clock has not started.
43	How far in the past (with regards to MED) will USPS accept a COA? And is there any difference with manual vs electronic?	Electronically (through ICOA and TCOA), a COA can be backdated up to 2 weeks. For lack of contrary information, manual COAs can be backdated up to 18 months old.
44	Please comment and clarify on the statements "Family Matching Logic must be used" and "All COAs must be used" with regards to the Move Update requirement.	The question was submitted stating "Family Matching Logic"; however, there is no "Family" option and this refers to "Standard Matching Logic." Customers may choose Individual only or Business only matching as it relates to the content of their lists and business practices. Customers should always be aware that they have the right to override an NCOALink provided address when they know it is not current.
45	Clarify what constitutes a "mailing list" with regards to a client's house files and is acceptable for the purposes of processing NCOALink.	If a client's file will be used for the purposes of mailing, it qualifies as a mailing list even if the entire list is not mailed subsequent to each NCOALink process.
46	Why do you not require that the output of a CASS product meet all of the input requirements of a Link product, as that CASS product is made available to the customer of the CASS postal coding product?	CASS does not require a standard output but is simply coding rules to obtain appropriate standardized addresses. There are no plans at present or in the foreseeable future to require CASS products to produce output in any specific format. We consider this a business-to-business issue.
47	Will a 48 month EU product be offered?	We are unaware of a compelling need to do so. We feel that the 18 month product used appropriately (regularly) meets the needs of EU licensees to maintain the AQ on their own address lists.

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48	Are there any plans to change the current NCOALink license structure or pricing as related to FS/EU/LS providers?	Licensee fees are established with the goal of enabling USPS to recover actual and anticipated costs for developing, supporting, and administering the product in the marketplace. At this time we think that overall the pricing structure is still appropriate to meet this goal and do not envision revisiting them in the near term. This does not mean that we will never revisit the issue, but not at this time.
49	What are the ambitions for incorporating address quality into the rate making process? For instance, will DPV be required in order to receive postal discounts; will there be grid-based pricing to accommodate variables such as finest depth-of-code, etc.?	AQ is priority. The AQ FRN, PMG's UAA reduction goal, Product Redesign, etc. These items and more are being looked at and considered as potential parts of future rate case makeups. However as you know, there are too many just too many variables in rate case preparations to say what or even if they will be in the next case.
50	Would you consider providing a six month NCOALink file to a FSP on a downloadable daily (business non-holiday) basis. This might start as a two or three day per week download. The purpose would be to have a file that removes about 6 to 8 days from the update cycle, especially for large mailers using ACS.	This is not feasible based on the time required to build the files.
51	Q: A licensee maintains a customer file and that file is processed through NCOA to obtain a change of address (COA). The new address from the NCOA database then replaces the old address, and the customer file is updated. Later, a portion of the names and addresses are selected for a mailing based upon pre-determined select criteria, but <u>not all</u> of the names with the COA are selected. Is this considered to be in preparation of a mailing and an acceptable use of NCOA? A: Yes, as long as the "select criteria" are not designed to specifically select new addresses (i.e., addresses that have been changed or updated). Criteria that selects a variety of addresses that, only incidentally, happen to include updated addresses as well as unchanged addresses are acceptable.	Position remains the same.

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52	<p>Q: A licensee maintains a list that is not necessarily a customer list. This list is processed through NCOA. The new address from the NCOA database is used to replace the old address on the list. Later, a selected group of names and addresses are sold for the purpose of mailing to those names and addresses. Is this considered to be in preparation of mailing and an acceptance use of NCOA? A: Yes, as long as the "select criteria" are not designed to specifically select new addresses (i.e., addresses that have been changed or updated); otherwise, a new movers list would be generated. Criteria that selects a variety of addresses that, only incidentally, happen to include updated addresses as well as unchanged addresses are acceptable. If new addresses that originated in a customer's NCOA processed list rather than a licensee's proprietary list are later selected to be offered by the licensee to other customers or for any other purpose, the licensee must have the customer's permission to do that.</p>	<p>Position remains the same.</p> <p><i>Note: The Postal Service considers it to be in its best interest and in the interest of its ratepayers to take advantage of opportunities that result in reduction of the volume of undeliverable-as-addressed (UAA) mail. Accordingly, licensee NCOA processing to update internal address files is an allowable practice that is incidental to having an NCOA license. It is further emphasized that the subject list in this question contains only one address per record, not both new and corresponding old address. If such lists/files are either offered to customers or are used for processing customer lists, the licensee must ensure that such lists will not accommodate linkage of old and corresponding new addresses.</i></p>
53	<p>Q: A licensee's proprietary old/new address file is processed through NCOA. The old and new address from the NCOA database is used to update the proprietary old/new address file. A customer's mailing list is then processed through this proprietary old/new address file with proprietary matching logic. The COAs from this proprietary old/new address file are applied to the customer mailing list, which is used to produce a mailing. Is this considered to be in preparation of a mailing and an acceptable use of NCOA? A: No. The NCOA database may not be used to update a proprietary licensee's old/new address file.</p>	<p>Position remains the same.</p> <p><i>Note: Licensee updating of their proprietary old/new address files, while generally prohibited, may be approved by the contracting office for specific, temporary, one-time use in the preparation of a large mailing that would otherwise be prohibitively costly and inefficient. A licensee's proprietary old/new address file, updated by special approval with the NCOA File for a specific mailing, may not be used for any other purpose, sold, rented or otherwise offered to others, in whole or in part.</i></p>